

# **Statement of Cooperation on Civil Nuclear Energy**

**between**

**the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

**and**

**the Government of the French Republic**

10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

## **Introduction**

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the ‘UK’) and the Government of the French Republic (‘France’), the latter being a Member state of the European Atomic Energy Community, acknowledge the essential role nuclear energy will play in their respective efforts to enhance energy security and sovereignty, reduce carbon emissions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, provide affordable energy and support industrial and regional development. Recent global events have highlighted the importance of a resilient and diverse energy supply and the value of nuclear energy in meeting this objective. As leaders in the European civil nuclear field, with plans for new nuclear development, the UK and France today express their desire to maintain and enhance their bilateral cooperation in the realm of civil nuclear.

## **New Build**

Both governments express support for the on-going construction of the Hinkley Point C EPR project in the United Kingdom and will work together to remove barriers and encourage collaboration, where appropriate.

Both governments recognise the proposed Sizewell EPR new nuclear power plant, a replica of Hinkley Point C, as being of mutual strategic importance to deliver economic and industrial benefits across the United Kingdom and France. Following investment in the project by EDF, and last November, by the UK, both governments recognise the significant involvement of EDF in the project and continue to do their utmost towards a positive and timely ‘Final Investment Decision’. To support the project, the UK proposes to make available regulatory and financing support. France encourages its export credit agency, BPI France Assurance Export, and associated bodies to support the project’s financing requirements. The French government stands behind EDF’s industrial role as core technology and equipment supplier to the project.

Both governments recognise the applicability of experience gained from the supply chains involved in Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C to EDF’s programme to build the proposed six EPR2 reactors in France and other nuclear projects as appropriate. To support the deployment of the large-scale nuclear construction projects in the UK and France, both governments decide to strengthen dialogue and collaboration between each other and relevant entities by approving the establishment of a senior UK-France contact group, drawing on industry and academia as

needed, to exchange views and encourage progress in operating experience, new build programmes, and supply chain developments.

### **Wider cooperation**

Additionally, both governments affirm their commitment to cooperation in the following areas:

#### **i. Energy diversification**

The UK and France reaffirm the position taken in the Leaders' G7 Communiqué under the German Presidency which built on both governments' common aim to further reduce reliance on civil nuclear and related goods from Russia, and assist countries seeking to diversify their supplies. We will continue to cooperate, through the G7 and other avenues, to support this aim. We will also cooperate to support our resilient nuclear fuel supply chains for the benefit of our respective fleets, including existing reactors and new build projects, and those of international partners.

#### **ii. Decommissioning & Dismantling**

As we develop our new nuclear fleets and technologies, we must work together to ensure that we safely and securely protect our respective nuclear legacies. We also recognise the benefits of cooperation in maximising fleet performance and safe operating life. We encourage the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), Orano, EDF and Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives (CEA) to pursue their collaboration on cutting-edge new approaches and to share knowledge and good practices in decommissioning and dismantling.

#### **iii. Waste Management**

As the UK and France face similar challenges on waste management and technologies, we encourage Orano, EDF, and NDA's collaboration to find new synergies in the treatment, conditioning and storage of waste. Both governments support Andra and NDA to develop their cooperation programme on long term management of all types of radioactive waste for ensuring the protection of the environment for present and future generations.

#### **iv. Research & Development**

The UK and France acknowledge the potential for new and emerging nuclear technologies including Small Modular Reactors (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR) to shape the future of the civil nuclear sector and provide innovative solutions to shared domestic challenges and global climate change. Both governments note the paramount importance of new and emerging nuclear technologies being developed and deployed safely and securely. We will support, where appropriate, sharing information and best practices in multilateral fora, including the International Atomic Energy Agency and the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency.

Both governments also support the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) and CEA's commitment to further strengthen their cooperation in research and development.

**v. Skills and diversity**

The UK and France recognise that a skilled and diverse civil nuclear workforce is essential to developing the safe, secure and effective nuclear sector of the future. We will encourage sharing skills and expertise between comparable programmes. Both governments encourage the exchanges between the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group (NSSG) and the Groupement des industriels français de l'énergie nucléaire (GIFEN) to address our respective nuclear skill gap. Attracting and retaining the younger generation and women is essential. We will build on existing initiatives, such as the UK-France Women in Nuclear partnership, to promote the development of skills and progress on diversity, gender-balance and integration of young people required for a strong nuclear sector in both countries.

**vi. Supply chain**

The UK and France underline the importance of collaboration and benefit of ongoing close working relationships between the Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) and GIFEN with the support of Comité stratégique de la filière nucléaire (CSFN) to promote collaboration between industries, including innovations in construction and manufacturing in order to increase project resourcing and delivery, and the capability and competitiveness of our respective industries to secure business opportunities in both our countries and others.

**vii. Fusion**

The UK and France recognise their ongoing cooperation to develop nuclear fusion as a low-carbon, safe, and abundant source of energy. We will pursue close collaboration in fusion research.

**viii. Safety**

Our two governments underline the importance of sharing good practices and maintaining cooperation in nuclear safety. We recognise the benefits to nuclear safety of maintaining the long-standing relationship and fruitful collaboration between Nuclear Safety Authorities, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and Autorité de sûreté nucléaire (ASN), with the support of Institut de radioprotection et de sûreté nucléaire (IRSN). In the field of scientific expertise and dedicated nuclear safety research, we welcome the ongoing discussions between NNL and the IRSN to develop new cooperations.

This declaration is not intended to be legally binding on either government and does not create any rights or obligations under international or domestic law.

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Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern  
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**For the Government of the French  
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